

Southern Science and Innovation Policy in the Framework of Globalization

- Evidence from South Africa and Brazil

Abstract

Science and Innovation (SI) are increasingly part of global politics. This paper develops the argument that state bureaucracies have defined their policy strategies since the 1990s under strong exogenous influences. Growing international competition in the global economy and a 'pluralization' of international actors in science and politics build a framework of 'globalization' which shapes the domestic policy making processes. As states rarely define their policies in isolation, policy transfer and learning are more and more common practice. Furthermore international governmental and non-governmental organizations promote policy models and guidelines, particularly in the developing world.

Late industrializing countries are in a special position in the international system. They are in an 'in between' status with high rates of income inequality, on the one hand, and strong technological capabilities and world class research in some sectors and regions, on the other. These characteristics are reflected in their international SI policies, where they engage beyond the UN framework in the outreach programs of the OECD and G8.

In consequence, late industrializing countries define their SI policy strategies according to three domestic-international driving forces: pro-poor and social inclusive policies, technonationalist promotion of national winners and internationalization. This paper presents a framework for the analysis of SI policy-making in late industrializing countries and preliminary hypothesis and findings. For a comparative analysis we chose Brazil and South Africa in the logic of the Most Similar Case Study Design. On the basis of existing research in policy analysis and international relations theory the study seeks to explain how policy models and ideas are transferred between international and domestic actors and how SI policy choices are defined and implemented. Furthermore we intend to contribute to a better understanding of the specifics of policy transfer mechanisms. This study draws preliminary conclusions on the basis of policy documents, existing research and interviews with Brazilian and South African experts and policy makers in the context of a pilot case study.

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